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FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF THE FIRST 25,000 ET PLACEMENTS

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
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Follow-Up Survey of 25,000 ET Placements

In mid-July, a survey research firm, Harrison and Goldberg, Inc. of Boston, conducted a telephone survey of 808 AFDC recipients who had entered employment through the ET Choices Program. The survey asked about present employment, job retention, wages, medical coverage, welfare status and demographics. This report presents the analysis of the survey results.

The key findings are encouraging. Of the total sample, 67% are presently employed. Job finders work a median 40 hours a week and have been at their present job 11 months (median). The total sample shows 59% have been terminated from the welfare caseload. The biggest problem area appears to be day care. Although we have increased voucher day care 600% since the ET Choices began, ET's success in helping people find permanent jobs and move off welfare could be further improved with continued growth in day care provision.

The report is organized in four sections:

- o Description of survey sample
- o Overview of key findings
- o Hard to serve recipients
- o Supportive services and benefits

1. Survey Sample

The sample of 808 AFDC recipients who had entered employment through the ET Choices Program was drawn from the list of 25,000 ET Choices participants placed in jobs from October 1983 to April 1986. As shown in Table 1, the gender, race, and geographic distributions of the survey sample do not reflect major differences from either the total AFDC caseload or all 25,000 ET job finders.

Table 2 shows additional demographic data not available from Department records but contained in both this survey of ET job finders and a 1984 survey of AFDC recipients. The most notable difference between ET job finders and AFDC clients in general is that the job finders are better educated on average: 72% of the job finders have at least a high school degree while only 62% of AFDC recipients do. Over half of the ET job finders surveyed (56%) live in private housing and over half (59%) are registered to vote. (In the general population about three-quarters are registered to vote.)

2. Overview of Key Findings

Tables 3, 4, and 5 present highlights of the employment statistics for the survey sample of ET job finders. The survey shows that:

- o 67% of the people surveyed are presently employed at a median wage of \$6.06 per hour;
 - 66% of women are presently employed;
 - 75% of men are presently employed;
 - 71% of those employed earn \$5.00 or more per hour;
- o the average length of employment is 11 months (median);*
 - 58% have worked at their present job 10 months or more;

*Length of employment is limited by the time since respondents finished ET: since the sample was drawn from all 25,000 job finders, some people were contacted only a few months after finding jobs.

- o the average hours worked per week is 40 (median);
 - 72% work 31 hours or more per week at their present job;
 - 56% work 40 hours or more at their present job;
- o 59% of the sample has been terminated from the welfare caseload;
 - 57% of women are off welfare;
 - 75% of men are off welfare;
 - 79% of those presently working full- or part-time are off welfare;
 - 91% of those working 31 hours or more are off welfare;
 - 93% of those working 40 hours or more are off welfare.

3. Hard-to-Serve Recipients

Hard-to-serve welfare recipients are those who tend to stay on welfare for long periods of time. The following characteristics are often associated with long-term welfare dependency:

- o Young mothers;
- o Having young children;
- o Poorly educated;
- o Having little work experience;
- o Having never been married;
- o Having been on welfare more than two years.

The data highlight issues and concerns from the survey sample of AFDC job finders relative to these characteristics:

- o Although that women with children under 6 years old are technically exempt from the work requirements, we found 43% of the sample have children under 6 years old. Of women with children at home under 18 years old, 44% had children under 6 years old.

- o Of women with children under 18 years, 58% had their first child when they were under 21 years of age; 19% had their first child when they were under 18 years old.
- o One indicator of being job ready is prior work experience. We found 66% had previous work experience outside the home; of these 53% had work experience in 1983 which translates into recent work experience.
- o A key component in predicting length of stay on the caseload, according to David Ellwood of the Harvard Kennedy School, is marital status: mothers who never married tend to stay on welfare longer than married or divorced women. We found 34.5% of those sampled are in the never-married category. The breakdown of the rest of the sample according to marital status is as follows: 11.2% married, 1.7% widowed, 15.7% separated, and 36.5% divorced.
- o Another characteristic of the hard-to-serve population is length of time on the caseload. We found 74% of those sampled had received welfare for 2 years or more; and 40% of those sampled received welfare for 5 years or more. For comparison, data from an earlier evaluation ET job finders in FY84 shows the 2 years or more group at 70.3% and the 5 years or more group at 35%.

4. Supportive services and benefits

- o Not all placements were retained. Of the 33% not working, 36% reported a child care barrier. Of those reporting child care as the reason for not working, the Southeast region (Bristol, Brockton, New Bedford, Cape Cod & the Islands) was disproportionately represented. This region accounts for about 23% of the those not working in the survey but shows 31% of reported child care problems.
- o A final comment on factors related to job retention shows that of those employed, only 55% have medical coverage at their present job. Of this group 26% report this coverage being employer paid, 59% report a shared cost health plan arrangement, and 9% report this coverage being paid by themselves. Lack of health surely impacts negatively on job retention.

TABLE 1

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS COMPARED WITH DEPARTMENT RECORDS

<u>Geographic Region</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>	<u>Caseload (7/86) *</u>
Boston	14%	20%
Lawrence	17	19
New Bedford	24	19
Springfield	19	20
Worcester	12	12
Greater Boston	13	10

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>	<u>ET Placements To Date* (10/83 to 6/86)</u>	<u>1986 ET Placements* (1/86 to 6/86)</u>	<u>AFDC Caseload* (5/86)</u>
Male	14%	20%	16%	5%
Female	86	80	84	95

<u>Race</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>	<u>ET Placements To Date* (10/83 to 6/86)</u>	<u>1986 ET Placements* (1/86 to 6/86)</u>	<u>AFDC Caseload* (5/86)</u>
White	73%	70%	65%	64
Black	13	17	20	18
Hispanic	8	13	14	17
Other	1	1	1	1

* Data taken from Department records.

TABLE 2
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS - II

<u>Education</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>	<u>AFDC Caseload*</u>
Less than 8th grade	3%	8%
8th grade graduate	3	29
High School incomplete	21	
High School graduate	29	27
Attended vocational or trade school or college after high school	43	35
 <u>Housing</u>		
Private	56%	58%
Subsidized	43	40
Public	14	15
Section 8 or other	29	25
 <u>Voter Registration</u>		
Registered in Massachusetts	57%	52%
Registered outside Massachusetts	2	3
Not registered	39	45

* Data taken from a 1984 telephone survey of a sample of AFDC recipients

TABLE 3

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

<u>Proportion Employed</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>	<u>DES 180-Day Retention rate*</u>	<u>DOR-ET Wage Match (roughly 1 year)**</u>
Yes	67%	70%	60%
No	33	30	40

<u>Length of Employment at Present Job (Employed Only)</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>
Less than 1 month	8%
2 to 5 months	19
6 to 9 months	15
10 to 12 months	20
13 to 18 months	12
More than 18 months	26

Median length employed at present job = 11 months

* Data from the Division of Employment Security.

** Department records matched against Department of Revenue earning data.

TABLE 4

WAGE LEVELS AND HOURS WORKED AT PRESENT JOB

<u>Hourly Pay (Employed Only)</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>
Less than \$5.00	27%
\$5.00 to \$6.99	44
\$7.00 to \$8.99	15
\$9.00 or more	12
Don't know	2

Median hourly pay \$6.06

<u>Hours Worked Per Week (Employed Only)</u>	<u>Survey Sample</u>
20 hours or less	12
21 to 30 hours	13
31 to 39 hours	17
40 hours	38
More than 40 hours	18
Varies/Don't know	3

TABLE 5

WELFARE STATUS

	<u>Survey Sample</u>
On Welfare	38%
In Process of Applying for Welfare	3
Off Welfare	59

